

**Meeting of the Chief Statisticians of the UN System
Bangkok, 30 September 2015, 13:00 - 17:00
United Nations ESCAP Conference Centre, Room H**

Meeting Notes

Opening, participation and adoption of agenda

1. The meeting was attended by representatives from FAO, ICAO, ILO, ITU, UNICEF, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCAP, UN Women, UNIDO, UNOHCHR, UNSD, UNWTO, and also joined by UNECE, UNESCAP/SIAP and UNODC via Webex. The World Bank participated at the meeting upon invitation by the Chair. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Pietro Gennari (FAO), chair of the UN System Meeting.
2. The agenda, documents presented and a detailed list of participants are presented as annexes I, II and III, respectively.

2030 Sustainable Development Goals

3. The Chair introduced the agenda item focusing on the challenges that the UN system is facing in the process of defining the indicators for monitoring the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. He raised a number of issues related to: a) the lack of clarity on what is meant for global monitoring and the role played by International Organizations; b) the difficulties encountered in establishing good communication flows between IOs and countries with some countries still needing more time to familiarize themselves with some of the proposed indicators; c) the lack of clarity on how the indicator framework proposal will be finalized; d) the need to improve the communication and collaboration between UNSD and the other UN Agencies in the finalization of the list of SDG indicators.
4. UNSD explained that it has been a difficult process and that the fact that the indicators were moved from the political to the technical level was an enormous achievement, which came with an extremely tight timetable. After some further clarifications on the process, the discussion focused on the role UN system organizations can play in the next two months, which is outlined under conclusions below.

5. **Conclusions:**

Before the Second meeting of the IAEG-SDGs (24-26 October 2015 in Bangkok):

- (1) Organizations should review the comments that have been posted on the platform in their area of expertise, identify the most controversial indicators and prepare statements by goal responding to the concerns expressed by countries;

- (2) If feasible, further consultations among the UN agencies should be conducted on the areas where full consensus could not be reached so far;
- (3) The Chair and the director of UNSD will organize a conference call with the co-chairs of the IAEG-SDGs to discuss the role of UN System agencies in the 2nd IAEG-SDGs meeting in Bangkok.

During the Second meeting of the IAEG-SDGs (24-26 October 2015 in Bangkok):

- (4) UNSD to Agree on a common approach and have a discussion at the IAEG
- (5) Organizations may participate as observer in the meeting; this means that their role is to support the members of the IAEG-SDGs with their expertise;
- (6) Organizations that will not participate may provide their views to other organizations, who may then speak on their behalf;
- (7) Organizations may identify one person per goal who will deliver a statement responding to countries' concerns on behalf of the whole UN system.

After the Second meeting of the IAEG-SDGs (24-26 October 2015 in Bangkok):

- (8) Organizations should continue to work with UNSD on “contentious areas” within their areas of expertise to finalize the list of indicators to be submitted to the UN Statistical Commission for approval.

Quality assurance frameworks

6. UNCTAD introduced the draft documents “UN Statistical Quality Assurance Framework: Preliminary Version, 20 September 2015”, “Generic Data Quality Assurance Framework for a UN Agency” and “Notes on the Development of Statistical Quality Assurance Framework for the UNSS and Generic Statistical Quality Assurance Framework for a UN Agency”, prepared by the consultant, Mr. Michael Colledge, who was hired by UNSD to support this work until the end of the year.

7. Conclusions:

Organizations, in particular the members of the task team, are invited to provide feedback to UNCTAD on the documents by 15 November 2015.

Principles Governing International Statistical Activities

8. UNSD briefed the Meeting that on the discussions with the CEB secretariat regarding putting the Principles on the agenda. As the entire CEB meeting (to be held 18/19 November 2015) will be devoted to the implementation of the SDG, the suggestion is to mention the importance for all UN System to adhere to the Principles in the speech by USG Wu. The Meeting discussed the pros and cons of having a dedicated agenda item on the Principles at the CEB meeting.

9. Conclusions:

UNSD will confirm the exact procedure with the CEB secretariat and inform the group accordingly.

UNSD will distribute to the Group the briefing note that was sent to the CEB (see Annex IV).

World Statistics Day (other business)

10. UNSD briefed the Meeting on the status of the preparations for World Statistics Day. Particular attention was drawn to the fact that, in line with the relevant GA resolution, USG Wu will write a letter to the heads of agencies announcing the celebration of World Statistics and inviting them to join the occasion.

11. Conclusions:

UNSD will distribute the draft letter from USG Wu to CEB members (see Annex V).

Organizations will share their plans to celebrate World Statistics Day with UNSD for inclusion in the dedicated website worldstatisticsday.org.

Election (other business)

12. The Meeting elected Mr. Pietro Gennari, Director, Statistics Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations as chair of the UN System Meeting for the next two years and re-nominated him to serve a second term as co-chair of the CCSA (representing the UN System organizations).

13. Next elections will take place at the fall meeting of 2017 and the Secretariat was requested to make sure that this item is reflected on the agenda for that meeting.

Annex I

Agenda

1. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (introduction: UNSD/FAO)
2. Quality (introduction: UNCTAD)
3. Principles (oral update by UNSD)
4. Other business

Annex II

List of documents

Agenda

UN Statistical Quality Assurance Framework: Preliminary Version, 20 September 2015

Generic Data Quality Assurance Framework for a UN Agency

Notes on the Development of Statistical Quality Assurance Framework for the UNSS and
Generic Statistical Quality Assurance Framework for a UN Agency

Annex III

List of participants *(in alphabetical order of the organization)*

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	Pietro Gennari	Pietro.Gennari@fao.org
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)	Sainarayan Ananthanarayan	asainarayan@icao.int
International Labour Organization (ILO)	Rafael Diez de Medina Edgardo Greising	diez@ilo.org greasing@ilo.org
International Telecommunication Union (ITU)	Susan Teltscher	Susan.teltscher@itu.int
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	Claes Johansson	cjohansson@unicef.org
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)	Steve MacFeely	steve.macfeely@unctad.org
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Milorad Kovacevic	milorad.kovacevic@undp.org
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)	Chukwudozie Ezigbalike	Ezigbalike.uneca@un.org
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)	Rikke Hansen	hansenrm@un.org
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)	Papa Seck	Papa.seck@unwomen.org
United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)	Shyam Upadhyaya Sooksiri Chamsuk	s.upadhyaya@unido.org s.chamsuk@unido.org
United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR)	Nicolas Fasel	nfasel@ohchr.org
United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)	Stefan Schweinfest Sabine Warschburger	schweinfest@un.org warschburger@un.org
World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)	Oliver Herrmann	oherrmann@unwto.org
<u>Joined the meeting by Webex</u>		
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)	Steve Vale	Steven.vale@unece.org
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP/SIAP)	Margarita Guerrero	guerrero@un.org
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)	Angela Me	angela.me@unodc.org
<u>Observer</u>		
World Bank	Grant Cameron	gcameron1@worldbank.org

Annex IV

High Level Endorsement of the Principles Governing International Statistical Activities

Background note

The Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

On 29 January 2014, the UN General Assembly endorsed the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, marking a historic moment for the global statistical community (A/RES/68/261). These Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics represent the fundamental values that govern the statistical work for producing reliable high-quality statistics for analysis and decision making. The GA resolution marks the first time the Principles receive the endorsement by the highest level of the intergovernmental process. The Principles had originally been endorsed twenty years earlier by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 1994.

The Principles Governing International Statistical Activities

In 2005, the chief statisticians and principal coordinators of statistical activities in the UN agencies and other international organizations committed to a similar set of principles to guide their professional work in international statistics: the *Principles Governing International Statistical Activities* (see http://unstats.un.org/unsd/accsub-public/principles_stat_activities.htm). They de facto are the “international organizations” equivalent to the country-level Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

During their second meeting held on Sunday, 1 March 2015 in New York, the Meeting of Chief Statisticians of the UN System¹ discussed the importance of bringing this set of Principles to the attention of the principals, the head of the respective agencies, organizations and departments and decided to request that the endorsement of the Principles Governing International Statistical Activities be discussed by the CEB. The CEB is requested to endorse the Principles.

Member States have endorsed the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics with a General Assembly resolution in 2014. Therefore, the members of the Meeting of Chief Statisticians of the UN System are convinced that Member States will very much appreciate the commitment by the UN system to also adhere to a similar set of professional principles inspired by the same values and aspirations that govern statistical work at the global level, in particular in the context of monitoring progress toward the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

¹ The Meeting of Chief Statisticians of the UN System comprises 26 heads of the statistical services of members of the UN System. The Meeting was formally mandated by the UN Statistical Commission at its 45th session, held in March 2014, and met for the first time in September 2014 in Rome.

Annex V

Draft letter from USG Mr. Wu to CEB members

Dear Colleagues,

I have the honour to bring to your attention General Assembly resolution 69/282, in which the Assembly decided to designate 20 October 2015 as World Statistics Day under the general theme “Better data, better lives”. The General Assembly invites all Member States, United Nations specialized agencies, organizations of the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, as well as civil society, including non-governmental organizations, such as research institutions, media and all producers and users of official statistics, to observe World Statistics Day.

Statistics are critical for evidence-based decision-making across all cultural and historical backgrounds of countries and irrespective of their level of development. In adopting resolution 69/282, the General Assembly acknowledged the fundamental importance of sustainable national statistical capacity to produce reliable and timely statistics and indicators. Solid data are an indispensable basis for informed policy formulation and for monitoring the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national, regional and international levels.

I am heartened by the overwhelming success of the first World Statistics Day, which was celebrated on 20 October 2010, with activities organized in more than 130 Member States and by at least 40 international and regional organizations and entities.

In order to make the 2015 World Statistics Day a similar success I invite your organization, as a producer, user and beneficiary of international official statistics, to lend your full and timely support to this year’s efforts. The Statistics Division of my Department, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, has created a website to share information on how this year’s World Statistics Day will be celebrated around the world (<https://worldstatisticsday.org>). I would like to encourage your organisation to inform us about your plans, so that your information can be made visible for the global community. Let us make this historic World Statistics Day a success by acknowledging and celebrating the role of statistics in the sustainable development of our societies.

Yours sincerely,

WU Hongbo
Under-Secretary-General
Secretary-General for the Third International Conference
on Financing for Development